



GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

DECEMBER 2017 VOLUME 8 ISSUE 12

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Homelessness
Awareness
Week
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Gratitude mingled with misgivings – will democracy be restored?



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

As usual in this season of togetherness and gratitude, my family, friends and health top my list of blessings. But this year I am also acutely aware of how lucky I've been to live in a time of peace and in a country that has grown and changed with the will of its people. I am appreciating those things more now as I see the real possibility of them disappearing.

It appears I am not alone in this. Apocalypse planning is now a booming industry. And the top fear of 75 percent of Americans is corrupt officials, according to the [2017 Survey of American Fears](#), conducted by Chapman University.

GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

Creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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While there are certainly some corrupt officials, I submit it is the system itself that is corrupt. Fear of powerful lobbies forces politicians to act and vote in ways that are distasteful to them as they face removal from office in either the primary or general election. They are subject to attack by unknown sources that can blindsides and overwhelm them in the last days before an election. It is very hard to resist being cowed by a Steve Bannon or the Koch brothers. Once a representative's moral rectitude is breached, it is a slippery slope to outright corruption.

Legislative reforms are quashed in their formative stages by entrenched industries determined to protect their every advantage. The current efforts at tax reform illustrate that well. Legislation had to be drafted in secret so it had a chance of even making it to committee.

Even city and township elections are now sometimes targeted by special interests. In last month's election, mailers critical of Raquel Castaneda-Lopez swamped the sixth district where she ran for re-election to the Detroit City Council. The mailers were sent by the super PAC Detroit Community Impact, a non-profit whose \$6,100 was spent entirely on literature criticizing Castaneda-Lopez. All \$6,100 of their funding came from Central Transport LLC, the company owned by Manuel "Matty" Moroun.

You might remember Matty Moroun as the owner of the bridge between Detroit and Windsor who has fought

relentlessly against the building of a new bridge. He was so effective at using his money to thwart authorization for a new bridge in the state legislature that Governor Snyder ultimately worked with Canada to finance the much-needed bridge. (My state senator, Joe Hune, received \$2,000 from the Morouns to help him decide how to vote.) Castaneda-Lopez represents the district in which the Moroun family wants to build a six-lane replacement for the Ambassador Bridge. Her main concern has been for the welfare of the surrounding neighborhoods.

"Issue ads" such as those aimed at

Castaneda-Lopez dominate advertising in the races for Michigan Supreme Court judges. Since the ads' funders are often undisclosed, there is frequently no basis for calling on a judge to be recused because the case involves a financial backer. Further, Michigan

is one of only two states that does not require personal financial disclosure statements from elected officials, leaving the door open wide to more undetected conflicts of interest.

A study by Princeton and Northwestern University researchers came to the same conclusion as the former Republican Congressman from Iowa, Jim Leach: **the United States is now an oligarchy.** Our government's policies reflect the wishes of the rich and of powerful interest groups, rather than the wishes of the majority of citizens.

All of this is troubling, but most troubling is the widespread public perception that change is hopeless. "...[W]e did a poll at the end of 2013, and we found that 96 percent of Americans believe it's important to reduce the influence of money in politics, but 91

percent don't think it's possible," said Harvard professor Lawrence Lessig.

But maybe the Leviathan that is the American people is awakening. Last year, the conservative non-profit Take Back Our Republic and other reform leaders joined with South Dakota activists to win a ballot measure that achieved real ethics reform. The response from elected officials? They immediately set out to undo the legislation.

South Dakota voters struck back. At the end of October 2017, proponents of Initiated Measure (IM) 22 filed in excess of the 50,000 signatures needed to place similar reforms on the ballot in 2018. However, this measure goes a step further. IM 22 requires any effort from elected officials to change or undo the will of the voters to go back before the people of South Dakota as a ballot proposal.

Michigan voters, too, are taking matters into their own hands. Volunteer petition circulators for the anti-gerrymandering ballot proposal petition (calling for voter districts to be determined by an impartial committee rather than by politicians in power) garnered the necessary 350,000 signatures in less than four months. It will be on the ballot in 2018.

Our representatives need to be reminded that it is *we* who pick *them* and that we will find a way to replace them if they don't represent us. And we need to help them out of the morass of campaign funding by special interests opened up by the Supreme Court. **We the people must demand a 28th Amendment that establishes that corporations do not have all the same rights as people and that we have the right to set campaign finance limits and disclosure requirements on all entities that seek to influence our elections.**

I am thankful that the process of reclaiming our democracy has begun.

TEDxUofM and GROUNDCOVER NEWS PRESENT

STORY SLAM

Thursday, DECEMBER 7
7:45 - 9:15 PM

Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea
123 W. Washington St.

Downtown Ann Arbor

Reflecting on first snow



by Rev Dr.
Martha Brunell
Groundcover
Contributor

The first snow falls, not so silently. Large, wet flakes crackle through withered leaves clinging to the linden's branches. They encase hollow milkweed pods below. Or they fall with little ceremony or grace in splotches on the empty deck. When the splotches blur into one another, they provide evidence of where I have walked out to greet this snow's appearance.

The first snow tends to surprise even if the weather reporter proclaimed with certainty it was coming. It rarely arrives on the day appointed for winter's beginning, exhibiting little need to honor the calendar's numbering of days. Snow accumulates, and I mount a search for my mitten's missing mate. The shortening of daylight is evident. Time marches on, past those who dread the dawning season and those who welcome it.

A fresh start is thrilling. This one, however, harbors the creeping fear of unknown days and nights ahead that may have to be crossed on wet roads quickly turned into slippery ice by the bite of a prairie wind. When I was young and very resilient in the winter, I worked with elders in Boston for whom the first snow signaled the long season inside when they were held virtually captive in their small living spaces, unable to navigate the sidewalks their absentee

landlords rarely cleared of snow. We labor in the winter from inside to outside and back in again as we don and shed all those layers.

Winter's weeks harbor memories of a successful neighborhood effort to engineer a childhood igloo and fast sled rides down any number of hills. Snow shrouding the nighttime streets of cities I have lived in has often softened sharp urban edges, suggesting an aesthetic unity in marked contrast to the conflicts of the day.

In early weeks of winter decades ago, I waited for the birth of both my daughters. I relive the joy of that waiting to this day. Now my older daughter is married to Carmelo, whose first country was Nicaragua. He is still in disbelief that winter is necessary. Where I currently live, winter's frozen fog ushers in a magical land that sparkles and shimmers.

Winter draws from us ambivalence. There are the comforting smells of homemade soup, balsam and baking spices alongside the persistence of inadequate shelter for those who are without. There can be a stillness that counterbalances our hurried lives and an unrelenting grayness that starves our spirits. Some neighbors have the means to escape winter's reign if they choose; others hunker in to survive its duration. Winter reminds us of limits we are wise to honor. We both struggle with and rejoice in the cancellations it brings.

Winter is crossing the year's threshold again, ready or not. It invites us to be more aware of the struggles of

those whose vulnerability increases in the dark and cold and of how we might respond effectively with compassion. This season urges us not to forget that growth is going on, even far beneath the surface where all ap-

pears dead and gone. Perhaps, this year, together, we can increase our capacity to thrive through the challenges hinted at once more with the first snow falling.



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Home of the Groundcover office

DECEMBER 2017 EVENTS:

December 1 Living Nativity, 6 - 8:30 in front of church
December 9 German Pretzel Sales, 10:30 - 12, \$1 or \$10 dozen
December 10 Children's Christmas Pageant, 10:00 a.m.
December 10 Advent workshop & potluck, 11:30 a.m.
December 14 Bethlehem Prayer Circle, 11:30 a.m. in the lounge
December 14 Blue Christmas service, 7:00 p.m.
December 15 German Pretzel Sales, 11-2, \$1 or \$10 dozen
(Pre-order by December 12 - call 734-665-6149)
December 24 CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES
Morning service at 10:00 a.m.
Evening services at 5:00, 7:30, 11:00 p.m.
December 25 Merry Christmas
December 26 Office closed for Christmas holiday
December 31 New Years Eve Sunday service, 10:00 a.m.
January 1 Office closed - Happy New Year

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Living Nativity
Friday, Dec. 1st
6:00PM-8:30PM

Bethlehem UCC
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Come to Bethlehem and See

Mental Health Treatment Court – a second chance at life

by Susan Beckett

Consider this scenario: a woman arrested for disturbing the peace is well known to local police. She has been involved in some sort of disorderly conduct call at least five times a year since 2012. But instead of serving time in jail or traditional probation, the prosecuting attorney offers to bring her case and probation to the Washtenaw County Mental Health [and Treatment] Court (WCMHC).

If she accepts and commits to the hard work of addressing underlying problems, she will work with the judge and a team consisting of a probation officer, psychiatrist and service providers to develop an Individual Treatment Plan (ITP). The treatment plan will address core problems and her desired outcomes.

The ITP becomes her probation “sentence.” She will meet with her probation officer weekly and come to court every two weeks to review her progress in the treatment plan with the judge and service providers. After a few months, if progress is positive, the judge and service providers will reduce the frequency of her visits.

Those who engage with mental health courts have a chronic mental health disorder and sometimes a co-occurring drug or alcohol addiction. They are often homeless, unemployed, estranged from their families and unable to pursue treatment services on their own. Incarceration does not change the underlying issues and the same kinds of behaviors recur upon release.

For those suffering from mental health disorders, meeting all the obligations of traditional probation can be impossible. Weighed down by depression, unable to think clearly or overwhelmed by trying to survive without resources, these indi-



Judge Valvo shared her passion for the Mental Health Court with audience members at a conference.

viduals are set up to fail in the standard system. The mental health court team simplifies conditions, working through problems sequentially and providing necessary supports.

A first step is stabilization, which might entail securing housing or substance abuse treatment as well as mental health counseling. Our hypothetical woman will be in treatment within 14 days of being assigned to the mental health court. Employment training and sometimes supportive employment might follow. Finally, she will graduate from the program with a support system in place, having successfully completed her probation.

“I’ve seen some amazing changes,” said probation officer Patrick Chase. “I’ve seen women get their kids back, I’ve seen people get jobs, I’ve seen people get housing after years of camping out. I see a lot of successes and some that

don’t feel like a success. I’ve seen some failures. The main deal is for the individual to buy into the goals of change and recovery – people think of this with addiction but it applies to mental health, too... We’ve lost people – we’ve had people die and that’s really hard. Life gets really painful for some people. We try to make it less painful for them. But as a court we are in the business of protecting public safety. By reducing the pain, we limit their need to act out and that translates into increased public safety.”

The Michigan Supreme Court recognized the revolving door syndrome that results when underlying needs go unmet, so in 2009, they experimented with sobriety courts and mental health courts. Significant reductions in recidivism led to more of these courts across the state and additional specialty courts for populations such as veterans.

There are now 33 mental health courts in Michigan. Judge Karen Quinlan Valvo has presided over the WCMHC since its inception in 2014. Her prior experience as a pro bono attorney for Avalon Housing clients helped her develop applicable discernment, compassion and problem-solving tools.

Judge Valvo meets weekly with the service provider team consisting of a prosecutor, defense attorney, court clerk, court coordinator, probation officer Chase, a police relations officer and representatives from the Delonis Shelter, Dawn Farm, Home of New Vision and Avalon Housing. For all the cases to be heard that week, they review the ITP compliance and overall progress of each person on probation. They discuss which goals might be appropriate to introduce in the coming weeks and recommend sanctions, if necessary.

The mental health court approach is fiscally sound, at an average cost of \$6,700 per person per year, compared to \$35,000 per year to house a person in the Washtenaw County Jail for a year. But, it is the 50 percent reduction in recidivism and the vastly improved quality of life for those who complete their individualized treatment plans (in lieu of probation) that please Judge Valvo most.

The 92 percent compliance rate for those prescribed psychotropic drugs clearly improves public safety. Individual and public well-being benefit from the 99 percent of participants who report improved mental health resulting from their treatment plan. In addition, 27 percent of participants further their education as part of their ITP. Although finding affordable housing is difficult, all the WCMHC participants so far have been housed before graduation from the program.

see MENTAL HEALTH, page 8

We can do better empowering women



by H. Kilbourn
Groundcover
Social Work Intern

“We can do better” was the subject line of an email chain that I recently received. While this phrase was directed at some of the racist and prejudiced actions recently surrounding the University of Michigan’s Ann Arbor campus, it resonated with me on so many more levels – especially on issues of women’s empowerment. We can do better.

Empowerment is the act of acquiring power that builds self-confidence and self-esteem. Ultimately, empowerment serves to enhance one’s individual and collective identity.

I do recognize that gender is not binary, but for the purposes of this article I want to focus on women and those who identify as women, as we are so often disregarded in society.

You might be thinking that women can vote, have jobs or choose to stay at home, and pursue higher education – which means they have equality, right? Those are

great steps, but this is not equality. It is not empowerment.

In my research, I came across an article in *The Huffington Post* by Soraya Chemaly entitled “50 Facts of Rape.” Did you know that *one in five* American women will be raped in her lifetime? Worldwide, one in three women will experience some form of sexual abuse. (I encourage you to read the rest of the facts: www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/50-facts-rape_b_2019338.html.)

I can sit in a college classroom and know that someone in that room will experience what it feels like to have their choice stripped away and to have their body violated. I know that there is a very high chance it will happen to me someday. Women are being violently targeted for an identity they did not choose. Power is being taken away and withheld from women.

I have been disempowered by things said to me.

A man told me that women are “ugly” with short hair. For this, I’ve had to sit in front of the mirror every day and decide if short hair really suits me.

I have been told by another man that “the more attractive a woman is, the bitchier

they will be.” For this, I have actively tried not to be confident in my appearance or my behavior.

I have heard a pastor make a joke about domestic violence (which mostly affects women) during a wedding. For this, I’ve cried knowing people I love will laugh at abuse. Would I ever be able to share my abuse account with them if it happened to me?

I have heard people say that a woman should never be president because of her menstrual cycle. For this, I haven’t pursued management positions. My passion is leadership and yet these are positions seen as “only for men.”

I have heard President Trump repeatedly define women in derogatory terms. For this, I realized that I am an object to people and that, as an object, I have no voice; people in power view me as an object.

I have heard when I accomplish something that it is “the reason [I] am married” – the implication being that marriage is a woman’s principal accomplishment in life. For this, I have undervalued my worth and accomplishments before I was married.

I cannot speak for every woman out there, but we share similar experiences.

These messages are why women need empowerment, for themselves and for future generations.

The American dream suggests that if you work hard enough, you can get anything you want. That dream shuts women out because no matter how hard we work, we are told, “You did a good job... *for a woman*.” I remember my parents telling me that I could do anything in life that I wanted to. I know that is a common statement from parents, but do we really mean it? Do we want little girls to grow up and realize that they were lied to? That as women, they can only go so far?

This is where women’s empowerment comes in. Let’s talk about it, but let’s stop debating whether women are treated equally in society – we aren’t. We need to agree that women face constant messages from society telling them they are not powerful and cannot make independent choices without being subjected to judgment of their womanhood. **Acknowledging that the deck remains stacked against women is a precondition to any substantive conversation about women’s empowerment.**

We *can* do better. We can do better by uplifting women and encouraging them to feel confident and empowered in their goals.

WASHTENAW COUNTY WINTER WARMING CENTERS

DAYTIME WARMING CENTERS

Dec 4-15, 2017

Journey of Faith Christian Church (8:30am - 4:30pm)
1900 Manchester Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Dec 18-29, 2017

Trinity Lutheran Church (8:30am - 4:30pm)
1400 W Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

January 1-31, 2018

St. Mary’s Student Parish (9:00am - 4:30pm)
331 Thompson Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

February 1-28, 2018

Monday, Wednesday & Friday ONLY
First Congregational Church (8:30am - 4:00pm)
608 E William Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Tuesday & Thursday ONLY

First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor (8:30am - 4:30pm)
517 E Washington Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

March 1-31, 2017

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801 S Forest Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

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So, any thoughts on what presents you’d like this year?

Is that “peace on earth” thing I keep asking for still on back-order?

What can I say? I’m trying to do my part.

Yes, I’ve come to realize peace on earth is a gift requiring a multitude of individual acts.

And don’t think it doesn’t break my heart as a mother to know it! We try our best only to see more conflict and division. How any mother can bear this is beyond me.

Well, I know you care and make your efforts towards peace. I also remember how well you took it when I ambushed you from behind the couch a few days ago.

Yes, about those attacks my “peaceful” little hypocrite.....

Oh, you know we were just playing. I love you, Mom, and never want to cause you any unhappiness. Let’s both enjoy the holidays and keep doing our part for peace on earth.

Seasons Greetings!

Community engagement and service learning – U-M students visit Peace House

by William Will Shakespeare
Groundcover Vendor #258

The University of Michigan (U-M) is well known for its commitment to community engagement and service learning at both the local and global levels. During his presidential campaign in 1960, John F. Kennedy proposed an initiative called The Peace Corps on the steps of the U-M's Student Union in Ann Arbor. In the 1990s, President Clinton invited U-M community development and social work expert, Dr. Barry Checkoway, to design and implement the AmeriCorps – the “domestic Peace Corps.”

Community service days are encouraged in most U-M Schools, Colleges and departments. The spirit of idealism, volunteerism, altruism and compassion is alive and thriving among the students. An army of them can be found helping with Groundcover News, the Ann Arbor Art Center, the Delonis Homeless Shelter, the Legal Aid Office of Washtenaw and Livingston Counties, the United Way of Michigan, MISSION, the St. Andrew's Breakfast, Washtenaw County Project Outreach, Avalon Affordable Hous-



U-M students from the Living and Learning Group helped clean up in and around Mercy House. Left to right: Aasha Sutton, Efe Osagie, Vinita Chaudhary.

ing, Ypsilanti Corner Health Center, Ann Arbor Housing Commission and numerous Metro-Detroit community organizations, just to name a few!

Recently, a multicultural group of U-M students who are affiliated with The Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives and the Office of the Vice

President for Student Life visited the Peace House/Mercy House community organization. They were ready to help.

Students were cleaning bathrooms, washing dishes, doing laundry, cooking breakfast, raking fall leaves, trimming the gardens, and assisting with making coffee and talking with the guests at the Mercy House Saturday Community Breakfast. It is also a learning experience for the students. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said in his book, *The Strength to Love*, “Every person you encounter is a teacher.”

Some of the volunteer students visited our community as part of their local church groups, including Harvest Mission, St. Mary's Student Parish, First Presbyterian, Lord of Lights, First Baptist, First Methodist, First Congregational, Zion, Trinity Lutheran, Webster of Dexter, First Methodist of Chelsea, Church of Nazarene of Chelsea, Knox Presbyterian, Lady of Light, Blue Ocean, A.M.E., Brown Chapel, Hope and several other churches in Washtenaw and Wayne Counties.

U-M President Mark Schlissel recently talked about the impact of the University on American society. He urged the faculty and other members of the University to expand their community engagement and involvement. Such leadership from high up encourages students to excel not only in academics, but also in efforts help serve and connect with members of the community who are less fortunate and privileged. M.L.K.'s favorite Gandhi quote is, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

Let light shine out of darkness
2 Corinthians 4:6



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Homelessness Awareness Week: Groundcover vendor-writers shine as they share

by Susan Beckett

Pony Bush, Shelley DeNeve, Lit Kurtz, Matt W. and Joe Woods all read some of their recent poems and essays at local events in November. A Groundcover News reading was hosted by Cultivate Coffee and Tap House in Ypsilanti on November 1 to kick off the month's Homelessness Awareness Week activities. The Groundcover writers were then the featured readers at the November 9 monthly poetry reading at

Bookbound, an Ann Arbor bookstore on Plymouth Rd.

Ed Morin of Crazy Wisdom attended both readings and booked our writers to read at his bookstore and tea shop in late April.

Lit Kurtz also participated in the Washtenaw Housing Alliance Homelessness Awareness Week storytelling event on November 17.

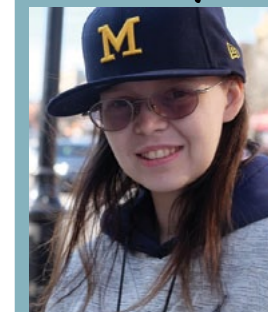
Groundcover is collaborating with the University of Michigan TEDx group on a story slam on Thursday, December 7 at Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea on Washington St. in downtown Ann Arbor from 7:45–9:15 p.m. (see ad on page 2).

Special thanks to Cultivate Coffee and Bookbound for hosting these inspiring Homelessness Awareness Week events.



Homelessness Awareness Week 2017 (Nov. 11-19, with events extending all month) boasted panel discussions, documentary viewings, and poetry and essay readings featuring Groundcover vendors (see photo). Clockwise from top: Lit Kurtz, Matthew W., Shelley DeNeve and Pony Bush.

360-degree change coming – happy holidays to all Groundcover readers!



by Tabitha L.
Groundcover
Vendor #360

I'm overjoyed that I will be coming home from jail at the end of next month. Remember to keep an eye out for me selling our wonderful newspapers. The holidays are a very depressing time to be in jail and I am happy to say that I will never have to deal with it again. I have met a lot of amazing people in here during my stay and I just wish them all the best of luck.

But, I am ready to walk into 2018 and make a difference in my life this year. My vendor number is 360 and I plan on making a whole 360-degree change in my life this upcoming year.

I'm so glad to be a Groundcover vendor and I can't wait to be back out on the corner in the rain, sleet, snow and sun selling our papers every day, and getting to meet all of you marvelous Groundcover readers.

So, everyone, have a great holiday and also a very Happy New Year. I can't wait to see everyone next month on January 26, 2018.

Make sure you stop and get a paper from me!

Two years sober and thriving pedicab company – it's easy!

by Kevin Spangler
Groundcover Vendor #307

I recently spoke at the University of Michigan hospital in the Cardiovascular Center to social workers, pediatricians and senior nurses about my story – how I got sober, changed my life and started a business to help people in my same situation.

November first was my two-years-sober anniversary. How did I do it? I utilized the pain/pleasure principles of neuroassociative conditioning, an Anthony Robbins technology: accept that I made the problem, come up with 100 reasons why drugs, alcohol and cigarettes are bad and 100 reasons my life will be better without those things.

Then I was able to use everything I have learned that was useless before because I was still addicted. I also created a goals list that took me 15 years in and out of jail to complete. I read these compelling goals lists every day to keep me in a positive mindset.

The top of the list is spiritual goals. I do a Buddhist chant at least an hour each day.

The most important component of how I stay sober is this: I view recovery as *easy*. I view *everything* as easy. This simple act of word transformation makes life easier.

In Boober pedicab news, Boober Tours is now rolling into the colder season, prepared. We have nice wool blankets and the occasional hot chocolate.

The Ann Arbor Marriott and Maize and Blue Auto Care became our newest advertisers. We are also setting up a food delivery service for the Marriott and a shuttle for the guests and residents. This is great news because I have been trying to create a well-paying position during the day for people in transitional living because they have curfews that prevent them from working our busiest and most profitable times (late evening). If this goes well, I may try to have this option for all of the hotels in the downtown area.

Take Time to Smell the Flowers

by Matthew W. • Groundcover Vendor #324

Life is short; Time is unmeasured.

Take Time to see the season change

give Reason to the Sun,

Let Life be explained

Without rain there's no pain.

Take time to Smell the Flowers

so life can be explained.



WE NEED YOUR HELP!



In Washtenaw County,
14% of our citizens
live in poverty.
Another 23% struggle
to make ends meet.

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United Way
of Washtenaw County



Local Dollars are
Changing Local Lives

Miller Manor Clinic opens through Packard and Avalon partnership

by Persephone Hernandez-Vogt
Groundcover Contributor

On Friday, November 16, several dozen people joined Avalon Housing and Packard Health for an open house at Miller Manor Clinic. The opening of the clinic follows over a year of partnership between the two organizations.

Aubrey Patiño, Avalon Housing’s incoming executive director, spoke to the medical challenges facing populations who experience homelessness. “The reality is that homelessness is lethal,” Patiño explained in her opening remarks. “Homelessness is not just a symptom of poor health, it is a root case. For those of us who do this work, we are far too accustomed to losing far too many people who are far too young.”

Patiño framed the opening of the clinic as part of a broader conversation, expressing hope that the clinic might encourage a deeper look at the connection between housing and health. “Models like [the clinic] build an evidence base for the premise that ‘housing is health-care,’” she explained.

Miller Manor Clinic contains a waiting



Dr. Ravi Vadlamudi and nurse practitioner Dr. Gina Dahlem of Packard Health work out of the new clinic at Miller Manor to provide primary care to Avalon Housing residents.

room and an examination room, and is warmly decorated with paintings and a large rug. Prior to the clinic’s opening, members of Packard Health conducted house visits for over 140 members of the Avalon Housing community. Social

worker Jason Prince described the clinic as a “step-up program” enabling community members with limited hospital experience or primary care to receive medical care in a comfortable environment. Patiño echoed Prince’s

thoughts in a brief interview. “It’s exciting that this has come to fruition; it’s an important resource... This will allow for a more normative experience,” she said.

The clinic, which is across the hall from the community center at Miller Manor, a public housing unit on Miller Ave. in downtown Ann Arbor, provides free medical care for those assisted by Avalon Housing. It will be run by Dr. Ravi Vadlamudi, a family physician whose colleague, Dr. Raymond Rion, describes him as a “rolling stone who rides his bike everywhere, even in the dead of winter.” Dr. Vadlamudi will be supported by Dr. Gina Dahlem, a nurse practitioner with a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan whose research focuses on preventing opioid overdose. Dr. Vadlamudi and Dr. Dahlem’s prior work doing house visits had a significant impact on residents; of those who had used the Emergency Department prior to receiving care through Packard, 90 percent reduced their Emergency Department usage.

Both Dr. Vadlamudi and Dr. Dahlem emphasized the role of supporting staff. “We cannot do this work without the amazing support we have,” remarked Dr. Dahlem. “It takes a team.”

year’s participants ranged in age from people as young as 18 to people in their 70s.

The WCMHC has been funded by the state through a series of one-year grants. This year a set of benchmarks for success was released and if the court meets the benchmarks, it will receive a four-year grant. That is especially important since the court often oversees probation periods of more than one year.

To refer someone to the WCMHC, contact Patrick Chase, Mental Health Court Probation Officer:

301 E. Huron St., P.O. 8650
Ann Arbor, MI 48107
Ph: 734.794.6761 ext.47577
Fax: 734.794.6762
Email: PC Chase@a2gov.org

Mental Health Treatment Court

continued from page 4

Success is encouraged with incentives such as a lottery for a \$25 gift card for each complying probationer appearing in court that day. And those who have been working their plan have their cases called first. Completion of the 12- to 24-month plan is celebrated as a graduation that includes a card, team congratulations, an optional speech to the others in court, desserts and a gift card.

There are also consequences for violating the terms of the ITP. The first transgression results in an assignment to write about goals, needs and the reasons for non-compliance. Adjustments to the ITP will be made, if necessary. Repeated violations may lead to jail time and possible removal from the program.

Services are provided by public and non-profit agencies that continue their relationships with court clients even after the formal two-year treatment plan has been completed. Case management – that is, helping clients manage logistics that might otherwise overwhelm them – is provided as needed by an Avalon Housing social worker. The case manager assists as needed with helping the client comply with probation conditions. Clients might need help obtaining a phone and learning how to set alerts for appointments, learning how to use the bus system to get to court or getting identification.

The initial psychiatric examination and report are performed by Community Mental Health doctors. Residential addiction treatment and transitional housing (halfway houses) are provided by Dawn Farm. The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (Delonis Cen-

ter) assists with medical care, job skills training and access to showers and laundry facilities.


Community organizations also play an important role. Volunteers from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) come each Wednesday and quietly provide extra support as well as peer-to-peer counseling. Referrals are often made to the Fresh Start Clubhouse, which provides an outlet for socialization and extra support.

Although they only have the capacity to handle 45 cases, the wait-list for the WCMHC is not long because people are graduating at about the same rate that new cases come forward. Eligibility is determined by the psychiatrist but any interested party can refer a case – even one in which traditional probation has already begun – to the court for evaluation for possible transfer. Last

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3						6	1	
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			7			3		5

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.



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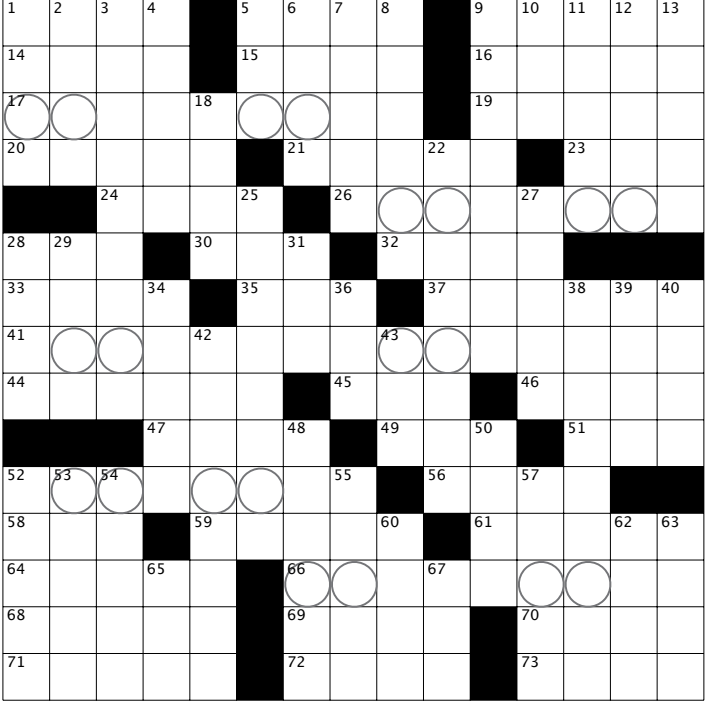
Happy Holidays Peter A. Collins

ACROSS

- Track meet event
- Omani, for one
- Resting places?
- "___ Want for Christmas is You"
- Snug
- "Get a move on!"
- One-handed attempts, on the hardwood
- Civil unrests
- Looney Toons skunk Pepe
- Electric car company
- Also
- H.S. exam
- Destination for some stolen autos
- It might finish second?
- Flightless bird
- Feminizing suffix
- Indian monarch
- On in years
- GMC S.U.V.
- Undercover cop's accessory
- "Cooking with Power" author Lagasse
- Cindy and Marcia's TV sister, once
- European peak
- On in years
- "Of course!"
- Solo in the movies?
- Squeeze (in)
- Hotel disclosure
- Get an ___ (ace)
- Subject
- Peter, Paul, and Mary
- Mother-of-pearl
- Pentecost presence
- Makes straight
- Iron worker's beam
- Mount on the Aegean Sea
- Skiffful
- Telescope part
- Berkshire school

DOWN

- "Fantastic Mr. Fox" author Roald
- Soothing salve



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- Pulled pork sandwich alternative
- Hits the trail
- German exclamation
- Kind of beer
- Montezuma, notably
- Percy ___ Shelley
- Explosive fragments
- 49-Across, in France
- Latte topping
- ___-Detoo
- Bulletin board overseer
- Took part in a triathlon
- Eliza Doolittle, for one
- "I'm off!"
- Take in
- "C'mon, Dover, move your bloomin' ___" (Eliza Doolittle in "My Fair Lady")
- Chicago Mayor ___ Emanuel
- Kind of beer
- Saintly glows
- 1993 Basketball Hall of Fame inductee, to fans
- Maximally
- "Stormy Weather" singer Horne
- Mashhad's land
- Having the least heft
- Bucolic bundle
- TV self-help guru
- Performed "O Holy Night", maybe
- One reciting the words in this puzzle's circles
- Collection
- As expected, timewise
- Mythical weeper
- GMC S.U.V.
- Tribal division
- Exxon, abroad
- "South Park" boy
- Workout unit
- Mtge. units

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Due process and access to justice – a frail marriage?

by Angie Martell
Groundcover Contributor

One of the bedrocks of our democracy is the concept of due process. Due process safeguards all persons from “arbitrary denial of life, liberty, or property by the Government outside the sanction of law.” It is derived from the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution. Essentially, due process serves two purposes: (1) to ensure fair treatment through the normal judicial system by requiring the state or federal governmental entity to respect all persons’ legal rights owed to a person, and (2) to prevent the wrongful deprivation of interests.

Lately, however, I have begun to wonder whether we are truly in serious jeopardy of losing this fundamental safeguard.

For the average person, getting fair treatment by the government and in our legal system has often been, and continues to be, difficult. While many groups like Legal Services and Michigan Legal Help (MichiganLegalHelp.org) provide wonderful assistance and information, the deck still seems obstinately stacked against people who genuinely need help navigating the law.

While in principle we all have access to the courts, the reality for many ordinary citizens is that meaningful access is in sight but out of reach and due process is functionally denied.

Barriers to court

The language and procedures used in courts weigh too heavily against a person who is unrepresented.

In civil matters, cases can languish for a considerable time before a resolution can be reached and average people have full lives to manage beyond the courts. If one side is represented by counsel, unrepresented parties can often unfairly falter without resources for a prolonged legal battle.

The bureaucracy of mandated forms is one common problem. Frequently, there is little to no uniformity between counties and a lack of clarity on appropriate forms and procedure. For example, there might be a case where both parties agree to a divorce and there are no children or property and debts to fight over. The parties just want to be divorced. One party starts the process, and the other mails a handwritten response in the mail

stating no interest in contesting the divorce and a willingness to sign a consent for divorce judgment. The court cannot accept this response because the responding party did not use the form required. The unrepresented party had no knowledge that a specific form of response was necessary. It seems the system is wedded to form rather than content. The perverse result: it takes \$20 to get married and often an exorbitant amount of money, time and effort to get divorced.

Any time you are enmeshed in the legal system it is imperative that you check the court’s website to find out court rules, forms necessary for your case and deadlines the court imposes. When in doubt, ask the clerk! Missing a deadline can be fatal to your case.

The cost of hiring a lawyer is another barrier that people face. Attorneys bill for the time required to fill out the forms and navigate through the court system. Without a lawyer, the monetary costs may be confined to filing fees – but traversing the legal system alone can come with its own price. Failing to file causes of actions, allege sufficient evidence of harm or prepare the case can cause a case to be dismissed without remedy.

In criminal cases, there is the vastly increased risk of the heavy penalty of going to jail. While you are entitled to an attorney if you cannot afford one, the inherent biases in the system and the overworked public defenders’ offices often make guilty pleas a more likely outcome than ever going to trial.

The inherent biases in the system arise from simple language and custom. For example, “Defendant” inherently means one must defend thyself, and the accused is labeled accordingly. The jury sits closest to the prosecutor. Even practicing as a lawyer, I have yet to see a jury of my peers or my client’s peers. These flaws are striking given that a person is supposed to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Truthfully, innocent people plead guilty in America all the time, even with a free lawyer by their side, due to heavy-handed prosecution and plea-bargaining. Being found innocent is difficult to nearly impossible, when confronting the strong arm of the State that has presumed you guilty.

In administrative processes, one must exhaust all administrative remedies

and procedures before filing a claim in court. This may require various steps and hearings. For parents dealing with schools’ administrative hoops, this can be very time-consuming and stressful, often resulting in a moot issue before it even can reach the court.

In Child Protective Services (CPS) cases, the mandate to “protect” can obscure due process. In these cases, you can be put on the CPS registry solely on the determination of the CPS worker’s “investigation” without much ability to contest. You have the right to contest this only by requesting a hearing, but you have a limited time to do so, and in the meantime, you remain on the registry. In addition, you could also have your children temporarily removed from the home and placed either with a relative or in foster care.

Closing the justice gap

Due process and true access to justice requires a fundamental change in how our courts operate. Having one’s day in court and fairness in that system should not be contingent on one’s ability to properly navigate the “system,” or remedied by simply expanding the pool of attorneys available to represent indigent individuals.

While lawyers have at times produced airtight, unassailable legal arguments, we have also been guilty of marginalizing most human experience. The legal system has overlooked the central fact of human life that makes laws necessary in the first place: that we are formed by and exist in a web of relationships. Our laws are about our relationships, and are supposed to affirm them by clarifying and enforcing rights and responsibilities so that we can co-exist harmoniously – not solely to punish and marginalize.

Access to justice and fundamental fairness in the system also requires a

transformation of how we resolve and view disputes in our courts and in our society. Our justice system must not only focus on the past while ignoring the essential interest of litigants whose lives have unwillingly and sometimes irreparably been changed by conflicts and “offenses.” The real question is, how can the litigants constructively shape their lives going forward? Sometimes, accomplishing this requires a true change in equalization so that (1) a party has the opportunity to receive all the information they are entitled to early in a case, as well as the ability to enter an alternative to adjudication early in a case; and (2) judges take an active role in ensuring that no party – especially those unrepresented by counsel – is taken advantage of in their courts, that all parties receive adequate due process, and that not only do parties “have their day in court” but their experience is one of possible healing and positive resolution.

Some courts have begun broadening into these areas by incorporating peacemaking, alternative dispute resolution means and collaborative practices – but this should be the norm, not the exception.

What the legal system has failed to do is to analyze the system itself and explore the *why* of a case. Why did this happen? Why did this relationship deteriorate to the extent that parties have been harmed? How can parties resolve this outside of the “eye for an eye” punishment paradigm? For without truly understanding the why, finding solutions and transcending conflicts at their chronic, systemic sources – whether they are individual, interpersonal, familial, business, organizational or workplace disputes – is virtually impossible.

For some Palestinians in love, this slum is the only place to live

by Miriam Berger

Courtesy of Reuters / INSP.ngo
November 16, 2017

Kafr Aqab is no one’s dream destination: the overcrowded neighbourhood separated from adjacent East Jerusalem by Israel’s barrier in the occupied West Bank is notorious for rutted roads, drugs and violence.

But for Palestinians in marriages in which one partner comes from the West Bank and the other from territory Israel had declared to be part of the Israeli state, the slum is a haven where they can live legally together.

When 23-year-old Yacout Alqam, a resident of East Jerusalem, first met her fiancé, she loved that he was “very kind. Very free. Everything.”

There was just one catch: “The problem of identification cards,” said Alqam, the wide smile on her small frame fading.

Hailing from East Jerusalem, Alqam carries an Israeli-issued Jerusalem residency card, which provides her many benefits but not actual citizenship. Israel annexed the area after the 1967

Middle East war in a move not recognised internationally.

Her fiancé, Adham Abu Lateefa, 23, is a Palestinian from the West Bank, territory also captured by Israel in 1967 but where the Palestinian Authority administers limited self-rule.

Holding a West Bank identification card, Lateefa cannot, under Israeli rules, live in East Jerusalem. Alqam cannot live in the West Bank without risking the loss of her residency permit, as she must prove she resides in Jerusalem to keep it.

So along with what residents describe as apartments full of other ‘mixed’ couples, he and Alqam see a solution, in a sort of twilight zone, in Kafr Aqab.

Since its inhabitants pay Jerusalem municipal taxes, Alqam can live in Kafr Aqab and still be considered an East Jerusalem resident. And because Israel’s barrier and a military checkpoint separate Kafr Aqab from the city, her fiancé can reside there, even with his West Bank identification card.

Thanks to its special status,


Kafr Aqab, once a small neighbourhood of several thousand people, now has a population in the tens of thousands who live in dilapidated high-rise buildings where apartments sell for about a quarter of what they cost in the rest of East Jerusalem.

Haya Khader, a Palestinian teacher from East Jerusalem, married her high school sweetheart, a West Bank resident, 18 years ago. Soon after they wed, a Palestinian uprising erupted and Israel built the barrier, calling it a bulwark against attacks on its cities. Palestinians see it as a land grab.

Khader said she hates living in Kafr Aqab, where she said “no one is responsible for us,” leading to poor municipal services. Israeli authorities rarely venture in, she said, while the Palestinian Authority has no jurisdiction.

Khader said she is resigned to the situation. But Alqam is holding out hope that her fiancé will be granted a permit to live in Jerusalem through Israel’s family unification law.

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Cranberry-caramel oat bars

by Elizabeth Bauman

Groundcover Contributor

Ingredients:

1 cup fresh cranberries, roughly chopped
2 teaspoons white sugar
2 1/3 cups flour, divided
2 cups rolled oats
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup butter, melted
1 1/2 cups chopped dates
3/4 cup chopped walnuts
1 cup caramel topping

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Mix cranberries and white sugar, set aside.

Mix 2 cups flour, oats, brown sugar and baking soda in a medium bowl. Add the melted butter and mix well.

Reserve 1/2 cup of the oat mixture for topping, then press the remaining mixture over the bottom of a greased 9-by-13-inch baking pan.

Bake in oven for 15 minutes.

Remove from oven and sprinkle with dates and walnuts.

Mix the caramel and 1/3 cup flour in a small bowl. Drizzle over the top. Sprinkle with cranberry mixture and top with remaining oat mixture.

Bake for another 20 minutes.

Allow to cool completely and then cut into bars.

Store in airtight container.

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